Fading and Finding

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Fading and Finding

by EverydayClumsy

Summary

The evolution of Hannibal's and Will's relationship after a tragic event.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Confession

“I was lately thinking…, it’s so weird.” Will said pacing through Hannibal’s office.

“What do you mean?” Hannibal asked as he watched the man wander and examine the paintings.

“Nothing really…,” He answered turning slightly to him “But then again, it’s important.” He sighed and turned around fully.

Hannibal regarded him and asked slightly narrowing his eyes “What’s troubling you, William?”

“It’s not really troubling me, Doctor Lecter. I had a lot of time to get used to it. It’s just that it has been on my mind lately.” He answered looking at his shoes.

Hannibal clasped his hands together and rested them in his lap, smiling he said “Then tell me. I’m here for you.”

It seemed as inside him there was a fight going on but then he exhaled “Alright…,” He took a few deep breaths before he spoke again. “But just listen please, don’t…,” He seemed to rethink what he was going to say. “There is no need for you to comment on what I am going to say. I would actually prefer you wouldn’t say anything.” He offered with a small smile.

Hannibal slightly narrowed his eyes again “Alright, if you wish so I will compel.” He agreed to the younger mans wish.

Will sat down opposite of him “I can’t…,” he started but didn’t finish the sentence.

“My world has been lacking in color for a long time now. Grey in Grey. I forgot so many colors, the feel of them and the warmth they radiate. It’s all gray in grey, no whites and blacks. Even the death I see is grey in grey. The red of blood; grey.” He whispered looking at the floor between them. “There are moments when the colors return, for a little moment, for a split second my world bursts in colors, I see the blue of sky or the green of the grass.” He exhaled and brushed a hand over his face “But then it’s gone and grey settles against like a weight over me. It presses down on me and it’s getting more difficult every day to stand up and hold it. I feel like I’m fading.” He looked up and looked him briefly in the eyes. He looked tired a sad smile played on his lips. “I think I should quit soon. This is nothing for me, not anymore.”

The signal that the hour was over sounded with his last spoken words and he stood up “I think our time is up, Doctor.” Hannibal didn’t know what to say even if he would be asked; he hadn’t anticipated such a confession. He was shocked.

Will took his jacket and left the office but halted for a moment to regard the still sitting man. He looked him in the eyes and voiced a calm and quiet “Goodbye.”

Thoughts and Dreams

Wills words didn't leave him even after he got home. 'It could be caused by a physical defect' He mused 'and maybe he didn't mean it literary, maybe it was a metaphor.'

Even after he lay in bed late at night the words flooded unbidden his mind and he watched the scene in his head again and again. He looked so sad, eyes lost in thoughts which broke him. His features sad from the weight they had to carry, the way he stopped fidgeting, all his energy drained. His sholders sagged and his breathing slowed down. His eyes focused somewhere out of the window. "I'll be quitting soon." Like a ghost those words wandered in his mind. He tried to reassure himself that Will meant the job. 'Of course he meant his job and he had his dogs to take care of.' He didn't want to think about other meaning attached to those words and the resignation that flooded Will eyes as he spoke to him.

The other thought scarred him and he didn't understand why. He was never scarred for others, mildly concerned maybe, but never scarred. It was an emotion he thought that died long ago. The thought of Will walking out of his life, was one he didn't want to entertain but he knew if Will decided so, he couldn't do a thing. For the second time in his life he felt absolutely helpless.

'No, he wouldn't do that. He walked through much more in his life. He won't do it. He'll be all right.' With that thought he drifted away info sleep.

In his dreams he saw smiling faces he thought were long lost. Woods and grasslands he walked through, voices and laughter. He stood before them now as a grown man not sure how to take the first step. He felt a warm hand in his and anther smaller one in his other hand. A reassuring squeeze from the smaller hand and a whisper 'All is forgiven.' and a warm hand on his cheek accompanied by warm lips on the other. And he took his first step.

With his first step he woke up and he could taste salt on his lips.

A Visit with Consequences

Next day he called him in the morning, not quite sure what he was going to say but he had to make sure everything was alright. He had to know.

It rang but Will didn't pick up so he tried again but he still didn't pick up. He tried to ignore the growing feeling that settled in the pit of his stomach. He felt nauseous.

Hannibal left his house, he had patients to see. He distracted himself by how rude it was of Will not to pick up the phone when someone was calling and that twice. 'Quiet rude'.

It was time for his lunch break and he toyed with the idea to call again. His phone lay next to him on the table. He picked it up and laid it back down, he had done that a few times now. A knock on his office door pulled him away from his thoughts.

"Agent Crawford? I'm surprised to see you." He said looking at the Agent.

Jack walked into the office not waiting to be allowed to come inside "Dr. Lecter, I'm sorry to disturb you, but this is rather important."

"You seem nervous, is everything alright?" Hannibal watched him with a raised eyebrow.

Jack sighed "It's…I don't know how to ask, but I'm concerned about Graham."

"Did something happen to Will?" asked carefully.

"No, it's just that he was weird this morning, well more weird than normal, he just went home saying he was ill. Did he say something to you yesterday?" Jack asked pacing in his office.

Hannibal took a deep breath and leaned against his desk "What did William say to you exactly, Jack?"

"That he was ill and…" The Agent began but Hannibal interrupted him.

"No, the exact words." He said with a low voice.

"I don't know something along the lines that the job makes him sick and he should quit and then he went home." Jack answered irritated.

Hannibal cursed under his breath and grabbed his phone, ignoring everything what the agent said further. His thoughts raced against each other in his head.

He cursed again as nobody answered.

"Call him now!" He barked piercing down the agent with his eyes.

"He isn't picking up." Jack said looking at the doctor.

He grabbed his coat and pushed the agent out of his office. “I’m going to see him.” He locked up and didn’t turn around to see if the agent was following him. He would deal with his patients later, now he had to see if Will and if something happened…, he didn’t want to think about it.

Crimson

Hannibal stopped in Will's drive way and Agent Crawford was just behind him. He knocked on the door but there was no answer. He tried to open the door but it was locked. He remembered where Will had his extra key.

He reached behind one of the chairs and pressed down on one of its legs, where a piece of wood moved to reveal the extra key. Jack only observed with a raised eyebrow.

The house was quiet, much too quiet. "The dogs aren't here." He said and then the smell of copper hit his nose.

That familiar scent he loved now clenched his gut. He rushed towards the source.

He threw the bathroom door open. The sight that greeted him almost made him throw up. Will laid in the bathtub half filled with water in deep crimson. His upper body was undressed and his arms were submerged in water. His body was pale and his head hung limply over his chest.

For a moment he couldn't do a thing, not move, not speak, not formulate a thought. He had seen a lot of bloody artworks and most of them were his own creations but this was different. This was a nightmare.

He wanted to look away, to walk out of this house and never look back, get as far away as possible. But instead he walked to the tub and kneeled down. With shaking fingers he brushed away the fringes in Wills eyes. His ocean blue eyes were closed and tears had left their paths.

He pressed his fingers to the pulse point and there was nothing, only cool skin beneath his fingers.

Fragments of his dream came back and pierced his heart.

A strong hand in his, warmth, soft lips, the feeling of forgiveness.

For a moment he thought he imagined it, but a moment later he felt it again.

Slow almost fading but it was there.

"Call an ambulance!" He barked out to the agent who hovered in the door.

"NOW!" He practically growled.

A life worth saving

He sat next to his hospital bed, he watched as his chest rose and fell. His pale face betrayed nothing, like a mask, showing what he wasn't. His arms warped in white dressing, hiding twenty stitches on every side. Stitches that now held his life in. His fingers were intertwined with Wills, they were so cold. He rubbed them slightly to bring life back into them.

It had been three days, he attended his patients but spend his free time besides Will's bed. Holding his hand and hoping he would wake up soon.

As much as he wanted to blame agent Crawford it was also his fault. He knew what was on Will's mind even if he choose to ignore it. He shouldn't have ignored this. He should have done something, anything. He was distracted from his thoughts with a slight movement between his fingers.

He looked up.

Will's eyes fluttered open slowly.

"Doctor Lecter?" He asked with a rough voice.

"William." He exhaled in a whisper, with a breath he had been holding since agent Crawford appeared in his office.

He pressed Will's hand to his lips and watched as the younger man emerged from his almost eternal slumber.

"So it didn't work?" He asked with a sad smile "I was sure it would work."

Hannibal didn't know what he should say. This man before him was so broken that he preferred death over life. His eyes bled desperation and sadness. His features slipped out of their mask of nothing into the more familiar filled with tiredness and resignation. Hannibal then realized that he had never seen a free given and honest smile form this broken creature.

"William…" His voice broke a little as he spoke "Is this life of yours really not worth living?"

He took a deep breath and pressed their intertwined hands to his forehead. "You save lives. Shouldn't that be at least one reason for you to stay alive?" He asked squeezing the others hand, still pressed against his forehead. His eyes closed.

"In all the saving I forgot to save myself. There is nothing left." Empty eyes looked at him. "I felt like fading but now I feel like nothing." Will said slowly, his eyes closing again. "There is nothing left, Hannibal." Will slipped his hand out of his grip and turned his head away.

Hannibal got out of his chair and sat on the bed. He took Wills head between his hands and pressed their foreheads together.

“William, listen to me.” He whispered “You don’t have to keep saving anyone. Let me help you.” He said slowly, as he watched oceans open and look into his earth.

“Let *me* save you.” He felt hands clinging to his front and the put his own around him and pulled him close. Inhaling his scent he pressed him close to his chest. “I’ll keep you safe.” He whispered in the soft curls and pressed a kiss on to them. He could feel the body in his arm tremble and warm tears seep into his shirt, but he didn’t care. His own stained his cheeks.

He swore to himself to protect him.

“You know I thought that just before it was over the colors would return but it was all grey in grey.” Will exhaled into his chest.

“And how is it now?” He asked him.

“It’s still grey.” Hannibal hugged him tighter.

Protection

“He won’t be returning to the field anymore, Jack!” Alana screamed at him on the verge of tears. He could understand her anger. How did he dare to come here, after what he saw, to Will’s hospital bed and ask for his help?

Ask his help with something that already almost took his life.

He looked at the man in the hospital bed, his hands were clenched tight and his jaw worked grinding his teeth. Hannibal lightly squeezed his arm before he got up.

“May I have a word with you Agent Crawford? Outside, if you don’t mind.” He asked with a tone that didn’t leave room for arguments.

As they stepped out of the door Jack turned around and looked impatiently at him.

“I need him back in the field. He’s the best we have.” He said brisk.

Hannibal suppressed the urge to tear the agent apart with his bare hands, here and now.

“Agent Crawford, William is still weak and will still stay a while in the hospital.” He said calmly.

“I don’t think that a few hours out of the hospital will harm him.” The agent protested and Hannibal could feel anger like a wave collapsing on him.

“You don’t seem to understand.” He said with a voice like ice as he loomed over the agent. “William won’t be going back to the field. He will still teach, but that’s all.” He saw that the Agent was about to protest.

“You won’t bother him gain or I will be forced to involve a lawyer and file a charge against you. Is that clear?” He asked with a ice cold voice and a burning stare.

The agent narrowed his eyes and turned around and walked away. He had the feeling that this wasn’t the last time he saw the pig of a man.

“He shouldn’t be coming here for a while.” He said with a smile as he returned to the room.

Alana was now sitting on the chair he occupied prior.

“Thank you.” Will answered with a tired voice and turned his palm up.

Hannibal sat down on the bed and took Will’s hand; he felt how Will slipped his fingers between his. They were warm now and were a perfect fit between his. He watched as he drifted back into sleep.

Attachment

“When will he be discharged?” Alana asked after Will had fallen asleep and his breathing had even out. He was still holding Will’s hand. In the last week he found out that holding his hand while he slept grounded Will a little and his nightmares weren’t as bad. Will needed the rest.

“In two days.” He answered not looking away from the slumbering form.

“He can’t be alone.” Alana answered her words heavy with meaning.

“He’ll be staying with me.” Hannibal answered and brushed hair away from Will’s forehead. In his sleep he looked peaceful, nothing like the face of deaths he found him. He looked nothing like death even if it was death he saw behind closed eyes and what he wished for.

She looked for a long moment at him “Are those the duties of a psychiatrist?” She asked finally.

“I long have quit being his psychiatrist.” He said looking over and smiling slightly at her.

She nodded with a sad smile. She knew what those words meant and he she had no right to interfere.

Getting things together

“What happened to the dogs?” Hannibal asked as he packed Will’s things.

“I found them homes, a while ago.” Came the quiet answer after a while.

Hannibal turned away from his task and watched as Will walked through his own home like ghost. A lost soul.

Hannibal followed him and pulled him into a hug, pressing him against his chest, just to hear and feel the beating heart beneath the cover of cloth and flesh. He had to make sure Will was still here; still warm, still breathing and that he wouldn’t go away.

A Rhythm

“I want us to go on a vacation, for at least two weeks.” Hannibal said over breakfast. “What do you think?” He asked smiling.

“What did you have in mind?” Will asked over his coffee cup with a slight smile.

Hannibal now smiled brightly “Europe.” He answered standing up to clear the table. Will joined him and washed the dishes.

It was their morning routine. They ate breakfast, talked about what they were going to do, Hannibal about how many patients he will have and Will about the classes he had to give. When they were done Will would wash up and Hannibal would dry. Will would roll up his sleeves and Hannibal could see the still pink marks and where the needle had pierced his skin to hold it together. Here in front of him, that was the only time he would roll up his sleeves. For the rest of the time they would stay down.

It has been now a few months after what happened and it would take a long time before Will would recover, but Hannibal wasn’t in a hurry, he would give him as much time as he needed.

Revelations

“Why are you doing this all?” Will asked him, it was the second evening of their vacation. They were in Athens, somewhere no one who knew them could find them. A quiet time for them to recover and relax.

Hannibal smiled “Isn’t it obvious?” he asked back as they walked down the white beach.

“No, actually it really isn’t.” Will said slowing down and then standing still. He regarded Hannibal with a curious gaze.

Will’s hair shone in the setting sun. His shirt was slightly open revealing the length of his porcelain neck. One of his hands was lightly put in his pocket and the other held his shoes. His cuffs where open and Hannibal could see the now whitening scars on his wrist, the scar he knew reached from his wrist to his elbow crook. His trousers were rolled up but still wet and sandy. Hannibal mused that he must look similar, to make the younger man smile at him as he waited for an answer. He returned the smile with his own and stepped closer.

“Really? I thought it was rather obvious.” He said still smiling as he slid his fingers down Will’s arm until he could take it out of his pocket and intertwine their fingers. He felt how they perfectly fit together, how their warmth seeped into his.

Will opened his hand and closed it again, watching how they fit together. As Hannibal looked up from their hands he could see how fascinated Will was with how they fit together.

“This definitely oversteps the boundaries of patient and doctor agreement.” He said still looking at their hands, amusement coloring his voice.

Hannibal chuckled and brought Wills knuckles to his lips.

“I gave that up being a psychiatrist with you my dear William a long time ago.” He answered gazing into sapphire eyes who now met his. Always longer than anyone else’s and longer than before. Looking away for a moment but always finding their way back to his.

“Tell me, why are you doing this? Why are you trying to save me?” Will asked.

“Is it out of guilt or out of pity? Please help me understand.” He asked finally, not accusing but being curious, holding Hannibal’s gaze and not flinching away.

Hannibal kissed Will’s knuckles “The reason is much more selfish.” He answered smiling. Will looked at him with a request to explain.

“You are very dear to me and I wish for you to be around for a long time. I want to keep you in my life.” He pulled him into a hug and buried his head in the crook of Will’s neck. He felt as Will’s, now again strong, arms came around him and pulled him even closer.

“Will you be around?” Hannibal asked against his warm skin. He smelled like the sea and the sun and underneath uniquely like himself. Like summer rain and winter forests.

“Yeah, I can to that.” Will answered and held Hannibal tightly.

I will stay

“I think I should get back to Wolf Trap.” Will said as he drank the last of his coffee. Hannibal watched him but couldn’t read his expression, mainly because he was too distracted by the statement on its own.

“Is there a reason?” He asked after the silence stretched out a little too long.

“Yeah, there is.” Will answered scratching the back of his head. “I feel like I’m imposing on you and should get back to my old life and not disturb yours further.” He answered slowly picking his words carefully.

They started absentmindedly clearing the table. As they stood before the sink and he could feel Will’s heat radiate next to him he found his voice again.

He cleared this throat and spoke “To be honest William, I wish for you to stay here with me. To stay in this house” He took a deep breath “In this house you made a home with your presence.”

He braced himself against the sink “This” he gestured between them “is important to me. I want you to stay.”

Will dried his hands and looked at Hannibal. He was in deep thoughts, his eyes unseeing but focused. A smile bloomed on his face and lighted up his features and made his eyes shine.

“I will stay.” Will took Hannibal’s hands in his and pressed them to his lips.

Hannibal smiled brightly. He moved one of hand to Will’s neck and he could feel the life pulse through him. He leaned down and pressed their lips together. The taste of coffee mixed with Will’s taste, lips as silk moving against his, warm hands now against his body pulling him closer.

I’m fine

“Where is Will?” Alana asked as she cut the vegetables, smiling at him.

“He’s in the study, grading tests.” He answered with a genuine smile only reserved for the presence of his friend. “He was supposed to finish a lot earlier but Agent Crawford made an appearance.” Hannibal thought back and had to hold back a grin as he thought how bluntly Will had told Agent Crawford to go away. He saw the worried expression on Alana’s face and added “Nothing bad happened.”

She seemed to think “How is he?” She asked carefully.

Before Hannibal could answer Will entered the kitchen. He gave them both a small smile.

“I’m fine, Alana, I really am.” He said as he stood next Hannibal and took a knife to start his work.

They did this often, cook together. He found out in the first week of Will’s stay that he was an exceptional cook and apprentice. Will learned fast and didn’t need long explanations. Hannibal liked it when Will cooked. He welcomed him in his kitchen, now it was theirs.

Hannibal preferred for Will to roll up his sleeves while they worked but he didn’t mind that he left them now down. He only rolled them up in his presence and his only. He knew the scars; he had plenty of time to discover them like the rest of his body.

“I didn’t know you are so good in the kitchen.” Alana said grinning “I know that Hannibal is a good cook and a good teacher but I will never be this good.” She said as she watched Will make flowers out of radish. “I’m a bad student aren’t I?” She said laughing.

Hannibal smiled at her “Oh you are a good student, Alana.” He chuckled “And as much as I would love to take the credits for Will’s skills, they are all his own. He was an amazing cook even before he stayed here. I only showed him minor things.” He said grinning at the man next to him, who turned slightly pink and then crimson when he leaned down and pressed a kiss to his temple.

He could see a sad expression cross her face for a second but he couldn’t bring himself to feel sorry for her. She had her chance.

They sped the time preparing the meal in a pleasant chat. Will was smiling and didn’t flinch away from eye contact. He didn’t search it but he also didn’t look away. It was a big improvement and Hannibal was proud of him.

Moving On

Late in the evening when Alana left, they both sat in the study in front of the fire. Will was staring into the fire; the warm hues colored his face and softened it. Hannibal often studied him whenever he thought the other didn't notice.

"I'm thinking about selling my house." Will whispered and Hannibal wasn't sure if he really had heard those words. Will looked at him with a soft expression on his face.

"Are you sure?" Hannibal asked after a while, his hands clasped together in his lap, his body seemed to be relaxed but it was the opposite.

"Yeah, I'm sure." Will answered and stood up to take Hannibal's hands into his. Hannibal relaxed again pulling him close and into his lap. He smelled like warmth and home.

Accidents

“What happened to you two?” Alana asked trying to smother down her grin.

They were both wet and covered in dirt and mud. Will started laughing.

“We walked through the park, catching a little sunshine and there was this dog show.” He had to stop to regain control but failed. Hannibal continued for him.

“And someone brought a tame squirrel.” He said grimacing. “As it turns out, it wasn’t that tame. To cut it short we landed in the pond.” He said not wanting to elaborate.

Will seemed to have found his voice again and giggled “Oh no, not the short version.” He said positively oozing mirth. “There was this large St. Bernard and the squirrel bit him and then jumped on Hannibal and crawled under his coat and as he tried to get rid of it” He started to laugh again and Alana couldn’t hold it any longer and started laughing too, Hannibal just sighed deeply. “The dog tackled him directly into the pond, Hannibal was trying to hold onto me and I went smoothly with them.” He brushed the tears from laughing away. “You should have seen it!” She looked grinning between them and burst out laughing again. In Hannibal’s opinion the whole situation was absurd.

“Your place was the closest.” Will explained still laughing.

“I’ll get you some towels.” She said as she disappeared from the room still laughing.

“Is it really that funny?” Hannibal asked with a stern look that was broken by the smile that he couldn’t hold back.

“Oh it is dear.” Will answered and kissed his cheek still laughing and trying to get out of his coat “I thought maybe we should get a dog but after today I think that wouldn’t be such a good idea.” He ended in a fit of giggles.

Hannibal looked at him for a moment. That was the first time that Will had talked about getting a dog again, a slight smile appeared in Hannibal’s lips.

For the most of his life it had always been just him but now there was someone who thought of him and added himself making ‘I’ to ‘we’. Hannibal now smiled brightly.

Happy Birthday

“Happy birthday.” Hannibal kissed Will sweetly as he woke him up. Will’s arms came and rested around his neck. He smiled at him as he slowly blinked the sleep away.

“I have something for you.” He said as he extracted himself from the warm embrace.

He left the room and returned with his present.

Will was instantly awake and his eyes went wide and his jaw dropped.

In his hands Hannibal held a puppy with a red ribbon around his neck.

“You got me…” Will started but his voice faded out.

Hannibal chuckled and sat down with the puppy in the bed.

“You…” Will started again but then stopped and stared at them both.

“Yes, I did. But she’s not only yours; I will also take care of her.” He said smiling while petting the little creature who tried it’s hardest not to fall asleep and sniff at everything new.

Will stretched his hand out and scratched her behind the ear.

“What’s her name?” He asked with a small smile.

“Venia.” Hannibal answered placing a kiss on his forehead.

Hannibal knew that Will understood as he saw the smile on his face grow. He took the puppy in his arms and petted it.

“Thank you.” He said and leaned further to place a kiss on Hannibal’s lips.

Return

“It’s beautiful here.” Will said watching over the greens of the meadows.

“Yeah, it is.” Hannibal answered patting Venia as she sat by his leg.

They walked a while until he mustered the courage to speak. He cleared his throat.

“This is where I grew up.” He said looking into the far, recalling things from his past.

“I never…,” He started but couldn’t bring it over his lips. “The night before I found you I had a dream about us wandering these paths.” He said and felt a strong hand taking his.

“When I found you I thought that I lost the chance to do this, to do this with *you*.” He said slowing down and stopping.

He took both of Will’s hands in his own. “I never thought I would find someone for whom I care so deeply. I…” Hannibal looked up and was met by a smiling summer sky “I love you, and I wish to spend the rest of my days with you, William.” He said pressing his head against Will’s.

A bright smile bloomed on Will’s face and he kissed him. “You know, the colors have been gradually returning to me.” He intertwined their fingers and they walked forward. Hannibal could feel a light touch on his other and he could hear laughter far away.

He smiled.

The Ending and Beginning

As the wind brought down a shower of violet Jacaranda flowers and carried the sound of bells, you could hear the promises and vows for eternity exchanged, followed by cheers and laughter.

And the *I do*'s lingered still in the air, even after the trees lost their violet blooms and seasons over seasons changed.

End Notes

Not beta read, if you find errors of any kind, please feel free to tell me :3.

I wrote this after s3e2 of 'Sherlock BBC' because that made me really sad and I needed distraction. I wrote around 12 pages and only now typed them down. The story is written in short chapters. I hope you like it, because this is one of the works I rather like :3.

Cheers!

Ps. I'm really shit at titles.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!